

Results of Operation Shield III against Illicit Medicine Trafficking and Doping Substances



News

Thomas Wahl

On 19 December 2022, Europol and OLAF informed of the results of the [third edition of the global operation SHIELD](#). Coordinated by Europol and supported by OLAF, the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), Frontex, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and the World Customs Organisation (WCO), police and customs authorities in 28 countries targeted misused or counterfeit medicines, doping substances, illegal food or sport supplements and counterfeit COVID medical supplies.

During the operation, which was carried out between April and October 2022, authorities were able to take medicines and doping substances worth over €40 million off the market. 349 suspects were arrested or reported to judicial authorities. 59 organised crime groups were dismantled, 10 underground labs shut down, and 89 websites taken offline.

The operation revealed that illicit medicine trafficking is seemingly as lucrative as or even more lucrative than narcotics trafficking for organised crime groups. While criminal networks are still exploiting opportunities offered by the COVID-19 pandemic, trafficking with medicines and protective equipment has met a significant decrease. Reasons for this decrease are a closer monitoring of the topic by law enforcement and the offering of vaccines free of charge by states thus creating an unfavourable market for criminals.

[OLAF supported operation SHIELD III](#) by leading targeted actions from national customs authorities. Customs authorities of 14 EU Member States intercepted over 430.000 tablets – mainly medicine for erectile dysfunction and hormonal supplements – and some 650 vials of various medicines. For the previous edition of operation SHIELD → [eucrim 4/2021, 209](#).

AUTHOR

Thomas Wahl

Senior Researcher
Max Planck Institute for the
Study of Crime, Security and
Law

Published in
2022, Vol. 17(4) *eucrim* pp 234
– 235

ISSN: 1862-6947
<https://eucrim.eu>



About eucrim

eucrim is the leading journal which regularly informs about current developments in European criminal and “criministrative” law.

All news items are freely accessible at: <https://eucrim.eu/news/>

Stay informed by emailing to eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de to receive alerts for new releases of issues.

The project is co-financed by the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), managed by the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).



Co-funded by
the European Union